



*Remarks by Secretary of Defense
William J. Perry to the New England
Council of the American Electronics
Association, Boston, Feb. 10, 1994.*

... I decided to talk to you about what's going on in Bosnia and what the U.S. government is trying to do about it.

A few years ago, [Sen.] Daniel Patrick Moynihan said, "Ethnicity is the great hidden force of our age." It's no longer hidden. In the last two years, in the former Yugoslavia in particular, we've seen just how great a force it can be when ethnic hatreds which have existed for hundreds of years explode on the European scene. We've seen ethnic hatred unleashing violence and devastation on people in Bosnia/Herzegovina.

The carnage was demonstrated in its most appalling form this past weekend with the slaughter of the civilians in Sarajevo. All of this was brought into your living room by CNN [Cable News Network]. It brought very much home to you what's going on in that part of the world.

This sickening scene led people all over the world and certainly all over the United States to say to our government, "Do something."

I want to start off by telling you what we have been doing the last two years and go from there to what we will be doing from here on. Also, I want to tell you what we are not planning to do. It's just as important, in many ways, to get that fixed in your minds.

Here's what we have been doing. Our policy has had four components to it. First, we have been limiting the violence in the area. Second, we have been limiting the spread of violence. Third, we have been mitigating the effect of the violence. And finally,

we have been assisting in the attempt to stop the violence altogether through a peace agreement.

Let me expand on these one at a time.

First, in limiting the violence, the United Nations — not including the United States — has 28,000 troops on the ground, a peacekeeping force. NATO, including the United States, has a sizable air force based in Italy and based on carriers in the Adriatic. They are there to deny military aircraft operating in Yugoslavia and to provide close air support for the peacekeeping forces if they are called on.

U.S. Forces in Macedonia

Second, in terms of limiting the spread of violence, there is a United Nations force in Macedonia, and this does include United States ground forces. Their purpose is to keep the war from spreading to that country and, in turn, to keep it from spreading into a war which could involve Greece and Turkey. Greece and Turkey could be on either side of the struggle, which would really change the nature of the battle that's going on in the Balkans today.

Third, we are also mitigating the effects of the violence. We have under way, and have had under way now for a year, an airlift and an airdrop operation, bringing food, medicine and clothing into Bosnia. We've brought in thousands of tons of food in the last year. This is an operation which has lasted longer than the Berlin Airlift and is about equal to it in the tonnage of food that's been delivered so far.

And finally, we're trying to bring an end to the violence. The European community, with, I would say, modest support from the United States, has been sponsoring peace talks for more than a year. As part of those peace talks, the United States has agreed that if there is an accord reached in Geneva, we would participate in a NATO peacekeeping force that would go in to sustain that agreement.

So my first point to you is, there has been real action under way by the United Nations, by NATO, by the European community and by the United States. This has involved tens of thousands of military forces. It has involved the expenditure of billions of dollars a year. I believe it has saved the lives of perhaps hundreds of thousands of Bosnians.

But the action has not succeeded in ending the tragedy that is unfolding in that country. The peace talks continue to drone on in Geneva with no real indication of success. That has led the world to question the effectiveness of NATO, to question the effectiveness of the United Nations and to call out, "Do something." Since we are doing quite a bit, what they really mean is, do more or be more effective about what you're doing.

Against that background and amid the scenes that were brought into your living room over the weekend, the president's national security advisers met virtually all day Monday and hammered out a plan of action, which the president approved on Tuesday. We consulted with our allies on Tuesday. This then led to an agreement by NATO on Wednesday, which I will

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tell you about tonight.

I want to tell you that the single most important thought as we went into this meeting on Monday was not what we were going to do, but rather we started off with a statement of what we are not going to do. We are not going to attempt to impose a peace agreement on the warring factions by the use of military force. We are not going to invade the country and impose peace on them.

It can be argued whether or not that's even feasible. But whether or not it's feasible, we've agreed that we're not going to try to impose a peace by military force.

First of all, it would be extremely difficult to sustain such a peace agreement, even if we could execute it. And secondly, there's some real question as to whether we could execute it with the sort of force which we might be willing to put in.

I can state flatly to you that there is no public support in the United States for such military action, and, therefore, there is no support in the Congress for that sort of action. In my discussion with the other NATO leaders, I would say there is a similar situation in their countries.

So with a statement of what we are not going to do, we then looked at a statement of what we were willing to do and came out with a policy that has two components to it. First, we should undertake efforts to accelerate the achievement of a negotiated peace settlement. That is point No. 1.

Point No. 2 is, since that process to a settlement could still take many weeks or many months, we should find a way to reduce the violence, especially the slaughter of civilians, while these peace talks are unfolding.

Those are the two factors that guided us as went into these discussions.

The first and the most obvious proposal was to lift the embargo on Bosnia. That has been proposed

many times before. We looked at that again, and looked at it very carefully this time, and decided, again, against it. It's easy enough to do. In fact it would cost us less than what we are now doing, because we are now part of the force which enforces the embargo to Bosnia. We could simply remove our naval forces from the Adriatic, for example. But as a test of any action we look at, we asked: Would it reduce the violence? Would it lead us more quickly to a peace agreement? The judgment we came to was no. In fact, it was likely to have the opposite effect in both of those areas.

High State of Readiness

The other action which we looked at, and looked at very seriously, was the use of air power, the use of air strikes. We have that capability in place today. It is a very substantial air force, consisting of almost 200 tactical aircraft, and it's in a high state of readiness. It's been practicing. It's been flying over Bosnia now for almost a year in what we call Operation Deny Flight. It's there to keep tactical aircraft from being used by any of the warring parties. It's there, capable and in a high state of readiness. On a day's notice it could be in a position to conduct air strikes. So that had to be a serious consideration. Indeed, had we decided to do that back in '91 when this crisis was first starting, it might have been very effective as a way of deterring the tragedies we see unfolding there today.

In the meantime, though, we've had 28,000 peacekeeping forces in on the ground. These are lightly armed peacekeeping forces in the middle of a heavily armed army of 200,000 men. So whatever action we're considering, our air power has to consider the fate of those 28,000 forces on the ground. They're not United States forces, but they're the forces of our allies.

Therefore, one conclusion we

came to immediately is that whatever we consider in the way of air strikes, the United States could not do it unilaterally. It had to be a concerted agreement of NATO that would consider what would happen to the peacekeeping forces on the ground if we conducted air strikes.

The second thing we had to consider was what political results would be achieved. Could air strikes, in fact, be done in such a way to accelerate the peace agreement? Could they be done in such a way to reduce, not increase, the levels of violence? If the air strikes we conduct are Act 1, what would be Act 2 and Act 3 of this melodrama? What would be the final act?

As a result of these considerations, the national security team developed a two-fold plan and presented it to the president for his approval, and he approved that plan Wednesday. The plan basically said that the United States, along with our allies and friends, will immediately undertake a major, and I emphasize the word major, diplomatic effort to achieve a realistic and reasonable settlement among the parties. At the same time, while these negotiations are going on, we will participate with NATO in the limited use of air power to seek to limit the carnage.

That diplomatic effort was outlined by the president in his talk last night. Basically he decided that the United States could be and should be a vigorous and an active participant in the peace process. We will go from being an observer and a facilitator to taking a leading, active role.

Having said that, let me remind you it will still be up to the warring parties to agree. Neither we nor any other country can, or should, try to impose a peace agreement on those forces.

The NATO military effort was proposed yesterday to the North Atlantic Council, and it was agreed to unanimously last night. This is a military companion to the diplomatic effort, and it's designed to minimize the violence, particularly the civilian slaughter that is now taking place, as these talks are conducted in the weeks ahead.

It's very important that we state our objectives for this plan of action

quite precisely, because there's been some tendency and some reporting in the newspapers to state them much more broadly than we intend.

NATO will use air power to reduce the shelling of Sarajevo — only for that purpose and nothing more. We're not undertaking the use of air power to turn the tide of the war or to favor one side in the war. And we have no illusions that the use of air power would be powerful enough to impose a peace settlement on a nation that does not want a peace settlement.

Specifically, what will this plan consist of? Effective immediately, NATO aircraft will be prepared to respond to any shelling of Sarajevo. The plan, quite simply stated, is to put in place artillery-locating radar in Sarajevo. If anybody puts a shell into that city, it will be tracked back to the source and an air strike will be launched against that point. The NATO air power is already in place and ready to go.

The second part of this plan is that the forces that have heavy artillery and mortars and rocket launching systems around Sarajevo will have 10 days to get them out of there [until Feb. 20]. Either move it beyond a 20-kilometer circle or to turn it over to the United Nations for impoundment. After that 10 days, any weapon discovered in that zone will be subject to air attack by the NATO forces that are there.

The assets are already in place to carry this out. Forces will operate both from NATO bases in Italy and from the carriers that are in the Adriatic. The forces will include planes from the United States, the United Kingdom, France and half a dozen other smaller countries.

This operation will be under the military command of an American, ADM [Jeremy] Boorda, who is the CinCSOUTH in NATO, the commander in chief of the southern forces in NATO. And it will be done in close coordination with the United Nations commander, [British Lt.] Gen. [Michael] Rose, on the ground at Sarajevo.

Incidentally, the two forces, the NATO air force and the U.N. ground forces, have been practicing and rehearsing for the last four months on how to conduct coordi-

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nated air strike operations, including practice runs at bombing ranges in Germany. So this force is trained, and it's ready to go.

What are the risks of such an operation? The president said last night, and I'll repeat it now, there is no military operation of which we can conceive that is risk-free. Indeed, even the noncombat operations we're now flying over Bosnia, the Deny Flight operations, are all subject to some sort of accident.

We fly C-130s into the Sarajevo airport any day. Any one of them could be picked off by a shoulder-fired missile. So everything we're doing there has a certain amount of risk to it. But as military operations go, this is relatively minimal in risk simply because in the areas where our air strikes will be taking place, there is no air defense system of any significance at all.

So we believe that this operation can be run with minimal risk to the United States and to the other air assets that are involved.

We're also conscious of the need to provide protection to the ground forces, United Nations ground forces there, who are greatly outnumbered by the Serbian and Muslim and Croatian forces in the area. The peacekeeping troops come from many countries. We have a responsibility to protect them, as well as to conduct this air strike operation. We will do that by several means, the most significant of which is, if any of them are in any trouble on the ground, we will call in close air support operations to support them.

I want to be very clear on what the limits of our military effort will be. We are not embarking on a policy of generalized air strikes in Bosnia, either to effect a military outcome or to compel the parties to come to the peace table. We believe use of air power is not feasible at any cost proportionate to

our interests that are at stake. And we know that the air power by itself will not end the fighting.

What air power can do is limit the level of violence and the carnage that's going on while we are conducting the peace negotiations. So it is the ancillary part of the more important objective, which is to put a greatly increased effort into our diplomatic thrust to accelerate the achievement of a peace treaty.

In sum, the NATO military effort agreed on yesterday is an important step, but a limited step; highly focused in purpose and scope; and part of a larger diplomatic effort.

I want to close tonight with a quatrain by W. H. Auden, the British poet. He wrote this in 1939 as Europe stood on the brink of World War II. He said, "In the nightmare of the dark, all the dogs of Europe bark, and the living nations wait, each sequestered in its hate."

Ethnic hatred once more is driving the Balkans to tragedy, another tragedy in their long history of tragedies. To avoid this nightmare of the dark, we are undertaking an effort — an intense diplomatic effort and a highly selective military effort, which together we believe gives us some chance of avoiding this nightmare.

The national interests of the United States call for us to make this effort. And the humanitarian spirit of the American people cry out for us to make this effort.

Thank you very much.

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In Newton, Perry outlines objectives of US in Bosnia

By Meg Vaillancourt
CONTRIBUTING REPORTER

NEWTON - Declaring that the United States and its NATO allies are "not embarking on a policy of general airstrikes, nor are we trying to impose a peace," Defense Secretary-Designate William Perry last night outlined US objectives in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

He said the dual purpose behind "the limited use of air power" was to "accelerate peace talks and to seek to reduce the violence and carnage in the Balkans."

Addressing about 200 engineers and defense contractors at a meeting of the American Electronics Association, Perry devoted his first public speech since being named secretary of defense one week ago entirely to Bosnia.

"NATO will use air power to reduce the shelling of Sarajevo - only that and nothing more," Perry said. "We are not undertaking to turn the tide of the war."

He said that "effective immediately," NATO will place artillery-locating radar in the Bosnian capital and "anyone who puts a shell into that city would be tracked back to the source of origin and an air strike would be launched against that party."

Perry added that the response need not be limited to the specific location from which the shells came.

NATO forces have been conducting practice bombing raids in Germany, he said, "so this force is trained and ready to go."

Underscoring the gravity of the situation, Perry ended his talk last night by quoting a verse by the poet W. H. Auden. In 1939, as Europe stood at the brink of World War II, Auden wrote: "In the nightmare of the dark, all the dogs of Europe bark, and the living nations wait, each sequestered in its hate."

Last night Perry said: "We are undertaking an intense diplomatic effort and a highly specific military effort to avoid the nightmare of the dark in the Balkans. The humanitarian spirit of the American people cries out for us to make this effort."

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The best (and verse) defense

Secretary of Defense William Perry flew to Boston this week to give his first public speech since being sworn in. He was supposed to talk to the American Electronics Association about changes in the Pentagon's bloated procurement system and defense conversion. But Bosnia intervened. So he talked about the "very precise" and "limited" goals of the threatened UN airstrikes around Sarajevo and the "minimal" risks involved. So what should we make of his closing remarks, in which he quoted verse written by W. H. Auden, the British poet, in 1939: "In the nightmare of the dark, all the dogs of Europe bark, and the living nations wait, each sequestered in its hate."

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